



## ***News Release***

**Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (Public Affairs)  
Washington, DC 20301-2900**

**Phone: (703) 699-1169**

**Fax (703) 602-4375**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **WWII MARINES ACCOUNTED FOR**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that two U.S. Marines missing in action from World War II, have been accounted for and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Henry S. White, 23, of Kansas City, Mo., and Staff Sgt. Thomas L. Meek, 19, of Lisbon, La., will be buried as a group in a single casket representing the two servicemen, on Oct. 18, at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

On July 21, 1943, White and Meek were crew members of an SBD-4 Dauntless dive-bomber that departed Turtle Bay Airfield on Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides, on a night training mission and failed to return. During the training mission, the aircraft was reported as crashed on a coral cliff on nearby Mavea Island. In September 1947 a U.S. Army Graves Registration Service team investigated the crash on Mavea Island, but recovered no remains. In 2012, a JPAC team excavated the crash site on Mavea Island, Republic of Vanuatu, and recovered the remains of White and Meek and non-biological evidence amid the aircraft wreckage, which included U.S. and Australian coins dating to 1942 and earlier, U.S. military Captain's bars, and a military identification tag that correlates to Meek by name and service number. What was found at the crash site, along with the remains, correlate circumstantially to White and Meek, however, no individual identifications were possible.

There are more than 400,000 American service members that were killed during WWII, and the remains of more than 73,000 were never recovered or identified.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

-end-